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Earlier this month, members of Congress and a bipartisan commission called on the Obama administration to take decisive action regarding what they described as an emboldened dictatorship in Sudan. The House of Representatives members, as well as commissioners of **the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom**, called for more engagement with Sudan after Khartoum's Islamic regime cracked down on peaceful protesters and members of the opposition party in the National Assembly.

According to reports, at least two top officials of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the primarily Christian party based in the southern part of the country, were arrested. Police beat demonstrators during the Dec. 7 arrests. Also, Sudanese forces fired tear gas into a crowd of about 200 and made dozens of arrests of people calling for democratic reforms outside the parliament building Dec. 14, according to the Institute on Religion and Democracy.